DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 318 813 UD 027 382

TITLE	For the Children: The TAC Chapter 1 Program Improvement Process.
INSTITUTION	RMC Research Corp., Denver, CO.
PUB DATE	90
NOTE	38p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Compensatory Education; *Educational Improvement; Educationally Disadvantaged; Educational Objectives; Elementary Education; Elementary Schools; *Formative Evaluation; Program Content; Program Guides; *Program Implementation; *Program Improvement; *Student Improvement
IDENTIFIERS	*Education Consolidation Improvement Act Chapter 1; Technical Assistance Centers

ABSTRACT

This guide presents the components and implementation phases of the Technical Assistance Center's Chapter 1 Program Improvement Process. The goal of this process is to improve the achievement of educationally disadvantaged students. The following components are discussed: (1) teamwork; (2) informed decision-making; (3) vision setting; (4) research and reality based; (5) site sensitive; and (6) focus on the student. Four phases of the process are discussed. Phase One, "Gathering Information," includes the following events: (1) teams are assembled and trained; (2) facts and opinions are gathered; and (3) analysis of the facts is initiated. Phase Two, "Targeting Areas for Improvement," includes the following events: (1) leaders begin to focus on problems; (2) action teams are set up to analyze strengths and weaknesses of the program; (3) areas for improvement are designated; and (4) alternative solutions to problems are explored. During Phase Three, "Building a Vision," the action teams present their analysis of relative merits of the solutions under consideration, along with their recommendations for change. At the end of Phase Three, the group has an idea of the way Chapter 1 should be implemented at its school, along with a plan for achieving its goals. During Phase Four, "Turning the Vision into Reality," the plans set in the previous phase are implemented. At the end of the school year, the change is evaluated to determine its impact on the students. (JS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED318813

FOR THE CHILDREN:

THE TAC CHAPTER 1 PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Susan Du-on

RTC Research Corp.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

UD 027 382

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

3/31/90

RMC Research Corporation
Writer Square Suite 540
1512 Larimer Street
Denver, Colorado 80202
303 825-3636

ECIA Chapter 1 Evaluation
Region 8

Technical Assistance Centers

FOR THE CHILDREN:
THE TAC CHAPTER 1 PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

For The Children is a Chapter 1 program improvement process whose goal is to improve the achievement of the educationally disadvantaged students of the school. It builds the current research on successful educational change into a model that can be adopted anywhere. Like any positive change process, it will not happen without commitment, motivation, and hard work (have you ever tried to lose weight or give up cigarettes?) But it's fun and it's energizing. Most of all, it's effective!

Here are the key components:

TEAMWORK: All of the steps and processes recommended here are built on teamwork and collegiality. Everyone has an opportunity to contribute. Team building activities are an integral part. Conflict is okay and will be resolved constructively. Successes will be celebrated! We strongly believe that teams are SYNERGISTIC, that everyone working together can produce so much more than any of us can do alone. We are all in this together..... literally.

INFORMED DECISION-MAKING: Information comes in many forms. There are the traditional, quantitative forms like test scores. There are additional objective forms like attendance, grades, and the like. There are also opinions, and in this process, opinions count. Opinions of teachers, parents and students are all solicited and are used thoughtfully. Multiple perspectives, using process and product, are considered important. What we know can only help us.

VISION SETTING: Visions can be set! It's important that they be set with data, input from all interested parties, and lots of brainstorming. Once set, though, they must be systematized. They need an organizing framework, timelines, personal responsibility assignments, resource commitments, and documentation. Nobody falls through the cracks. Public commitments are made. Appeals for time and resources are rational and connected to the plan. In short, visions are built and then connected to action.

RESEARCH AND REALITY BASED: No need to reinvent the wheel! Review the best of the research. Visit the best of the programs. Network with your colleagues. Use all of this information to tailor what works for others into something that can work in your program.

UD 027 382

SITE SENSITIVE: Every school is different. There are different personalities, different values, and different problems. What works for one setting may not work for you. All solutions are tailored. They are selected, modified, and implemented to fit your unique situation.

FOCUSED FOREVER ON THE STUDENT: The name of this improvement process says it all. Its whole purpose is to do For The Children. Always focus on student outcomes. Always ask what is in it for them. Always have their welfare at heart.

These themes form the foundation of this Chapter 1 program improvement process. **For The Children** takes time, energy and thoughtfulness. Its promise lies in its ability to secure success. With these themes, the process highlights the need for commitment by those who will implement the changes. It builds in high levels of interaction, visibility, and leadership at all levels. It includes ways to rally support, to build consensus, to work in collegial teams, and to celebrate success. It does these things in a systematic way, using data and providing guidelines, planning tools, and structure so that the process will go forward.

Change is never easy. But **For The Children** can make change efforts successful. Make it work for you!

For The Children:
The TAC Chapter 1 Program Improvement Process

Introduction

For The Children is a Chapter 1 program improvement process that is based on the same research it espouses. It is systematic and highly interactive. It is based on informed decision-making, and focused on student outcome. It will generate "buy-in" from all groups involved since they have a direct say in what gets built in to the program. Leadership in this process is key, and district support is mandatory.

Building upon the research literature on successful educational change, **For The Children** has four phases:

PHASE ONE: GATHERING INFORMATION

PHASE TWO: TARGETING AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

PHASE THREE: BUILDING A VISION

PHASE FOUR: TURNING THE VISION INTO REALITY

The first phase is GATHERING INFORMATION. During this phase, teams will be assembled and trained, facts and opinions will be gathered, and analysis of the facts will be initiated.

Phase two, TARGETING AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT, is where focusing on problems and setting up action teams to explore alternative solutions takes place. With the information gathered in the first phase, the facilitation team will bring people together to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The facilitation team will bring the group as a whole to consensus on which areas will be targeted for improvement. Once areas are identified, action teams will be formed to investigate alternative solutions. These action teams will review the research literature and communicate with programs who have the solutions under consideration in place. If major changes are anticipated, the action teams will visit programs who have the envisioned practice in place so that they can get a more realistic view of what is involved both in the practice and in the steps that will be necessary to implement the practice at their school.

In phase three, BUILDING A VISION, the action teams will present their analysis of the relative merits of the solutions under consideration, along with their recommendations for change. These recommendations will be discussed by the group as a whole. At the end of this phase, the group will have built a vision of what they see

as the way Chapter 1 should look at their school, along with a systematic plan for getting there, complete with change strategies, assignments, timelines, and a list of anticipated resources needed.

Phase four, TURNING THE VISION INTO REALITY, involves implementing the plans set in the previous phase. Those who will implement the plan are trained, materials are acquired, and the vision is translated into action. The facilitation team monitors the effort, providing support and problem solving assistance if needed. At predetermined points, staff come together to discuss progress and to offer suggestions for any fine tuning that needs to occur. At the end of the school year, the change is evaluated to determine its impact on the students. Success is celebrated! The plan is reviewed and updated for the next year and commitment is renewed.

Each of the phases in For The Children requires thoughtfulness and planning. Guides, examples and planning forms are available for every phase, along with tips for success and for problem solving. The details of the process and phases are presented next.

For The Children: The Phases

Phase One: GATHERING INFORMATION

The GATHERING INFORMATION phase initiates the Chapter 1 program improvement process. It is where the program takes a good look at itself to see what the data say and what people think about the activities and impact of Chapter 1. The more time spent here, the more likely things are to go smoothly later.

The tasks involved in this phase are setting up teams and gathering information about all facets of the Chapter 1 program. The keys to success here are effective planning, teamwork and getting everyone involved. The participation of those who will be asked to implement the change is especially important. Their "buy-in" is a critical factor in determining the eventual outcome of the change efforts.

The GATHERING INFORMATION phase has three parts:

o Setting up the facilitation team

The first step in For The Children is to set up a facilitation team. Research has shown that the most effective teams to initiate a Chapter 1 improvement process are made up of principals, program administrators, and teachers, both from Chapter 1 and from the regular classroom. The function of this team is to gather information on student outcome measures and to facilitate the gathering of the information and opinions about the program from various constituencies.

Once the team is formed, it is important for its members to be trained in facilitation techniques. During this training, the team will determine how information will be gathered, and who will be responsible for gathering the information. The team will also plan the details of data collection, including setting the timeline, deciding who will facilitate which dialogue groups, arranging for rooms and refreshments, and making sure everything is going according to schedule.

o Gathering student performance data

After receiving orientation to the process and training in facilitation techniques, the team will initiate its data gathering. The team decides which student performance data to collect, who will be responsible for its collection and deadlines for reporting back to the group.

Suggested types of student performance data to be gathered include:

Test scores: NRTs, DRTs, CRTs, subtests
Assessments: writing, classroom performance
Other measures: attendance, grades, retention rates and so on

These data will be reviewed to determine the character and extent of the problem. Data will reveal which specific instructional areas are in need of improvement, which children are not showing progress, the type of problems the program is facing, whether the same problems exist in every grade, how widespread the problem is, and whether it exists in the school as a whole.

o Gathering information from important constituencies

The second part of the data collection phase is gathering information and/or opinions from various constituencies who are directly involved with the Chapter 1 program. These constituencies include both regular classroom and Chapter 1 teachers, parents of Chapter 1 students, and Chapter 1 students themselves. Gathering input from these groups is critical to the process in that it recognizes and values the opinions of all who will ultimately be affected by the changes that will take place. It helps to get as many people involved from these constituencies as possible, so that they will be supportive of the change efforts that will take place.

Information is to be gathered from these consituencies by conducting dialogue groups. It is recommended that the dialogue groups include 3 to 5 people and 1 facilitator. There should be separate dialogue groups for teachers, for parents, and for students.

The way this information is collected is as important as the information itself. The facilitation team must remain nonjudgmental, yet be able to probe for more information and to build consensus among those providing the information. (This is why training in facilitation techniques is provided, along with interview guidelines and training in conflict management.)

The following strategies are recommended for information gathering:

For teachers:
o have them think about two specific students in Chapter 1 who they think have been appropriately placed but who are not making sufficient progress. What specifically would they recommend to help these students achieve? Are there programmatic changes that could help?

o have them then think about an "ideal" Chapter 1 program. What does it look like? What makes it ideal? Is there any reason why their program can't look like that? If so, how can these barriers be overcome?

For parents:
o have them think about their own children. What do they think the school could do to help their children achieve more?

o have them think about the children's sources of influence...the home, peers, etc. How can each of these groups help? Is there any reason why these changes can't be made? If so, how can we overcome these barriers?

For students:
o have them think about how to help students who are having trouble with reading or with math. What do they think the class should be like?

In all of these dialogues, look for patterns and common themes. This will become a key part of the next phase of the process.

Phase Two: TARGETING AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Targeting Areas for Improvement phase brings focus, site sensitivity and informed decision-making to the improvement process. Using the data collected in the GATHERING INFORMATION phase, the facilitation team will hold a meeting to debrief all interested parties about what was found and initiate an analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Based on this analysis, areas for improvement will be targeted, and plans will be made about gathering information regarding alternative solutions.

The two parts of this phase are as follows:

o Focusing on the data

Bringing focus to the information gathered in the previous phase is a team process. Once the student performance data and the dialogue group data have been collected, all interested participating parties are gathered together for debriefing by the facilitation team. Once everyone has been presented with the "facts", the facilitation team presents its analysis, focusing on the patterns that were found, and checking for consensus. It is expected that there will be a great deal of discussion here. Differences of opinion on some issues are to be expected, but the team is responsible for bringing focus to the process, and generating agreement as to which areas will be targeted for improvement efforts.

It is best not to be too ambitious here: select only one or two areas to target for change.

Once consensus on the areas to target has been reached, the facilitation team will solicit volunteers to make up action teams. The function of these teams is to identify and investigate possible strategies/solutions to meet the challenges in the areas targeted. The group may want to set up separate action teams to investigate particular strategies or a single action team to address the range of solutions possible in that area.

Facilitation team members will monitor and provide support for the action team members, set up a timeline for completion of the action team mission, and conduct the debriefing session where the vision will be built.

o Researching solutions

The action teams that have formed during the focus session need to initiate their mission by planning. It is helpful to be systematic in their approach. The teams should set out a plan for reviewing the research and for exploring alternatives. The TAC and the SEA can help guide the teams in their search for information and in their search for programs who have implemented the practices the teams are considering.

The action teams should make arrangements for communicating with schools who have implemented the practices under consideration. If the practices involve major changes in instructional delivery or philosophy, it is recommended that the teams send representatives to visit schools who have the envisioned change in place so that the team gets a more realistic picture about what is involved in both the practice itself and the steps necessary to take to implement the paractice. While visiting, it is important that the teams observe both the students and teachers, and to talk to them along with the program administrators. Team members should discuss the costs and benefits of the practice under consideration with those they are visiting, asking about the resources needed, time involved, problems in implementation and the like.

Once information is gathered, the action teams should thoroughly discuss the relative feasibility of the practices they investigated, the steps they think would go into implementing such practices, costs, resources needed, etc. The goal is to generate a series of options, each with a rationale as to how this practice will meet the Chapter 1 program needs, the benefits that will result in the change, any potential problems, and a list of resources required. These analyses must take local considerations into account and deal firmly with reality.

Phase Three: BUILDING A VISION

This phase brings all interested parties together to make decisions about the direction the Chapter 1 program will take. The action teams will present their analyses and the group will discuss the relative merits of each alternative. Once everyone has a full understanding of each alternative, the group will decide what their vision of Chapter 1 entails, and the changes that will need to be made to fulfull this vision. Because the action teams have researched the alternatives thoroughly, this vision should be both realistic and attainable within a specified timeframe. It also should produce results in the form of positive impact on student performance measures.

At the end of this phase, the group will have concrete plans. They will have decided what changes they will implement, what steps will be taken to implement these changes, who is responsible, what resources are needed, what the timelines are, and how they will know they have been successful.

The two parts of this phase are as follows:

o Building a vision

By a specified deadline set in the previous phase, the action teams will have done their research, communicated with other Chapter 1 programs, visited programs as needed, and discussed the relative merits of the alternatives they have investigated. The next step is to gather the teams and other interested parties together for a discussion of all of the alternatives investigated, to hear their recommendations, and to come to consensus on what should be done. This involves building a vision of what the Chapter 1 program will look like and translating this vision into a concrete plan.

While it is important to be reflective on all of the possibilities, it is also important not to try to make too many changes at the same time. Being too ambitious can lead to fragmentation or a sense of being overwhelmed. Even if the vision incorporates major changes, the group should select only one or two initial areas for change. The entire vision can be reached, but to do so successfully requires proceeding one step at a time.

o Writing the action plan

Once the group has built its vision and selected strategies, the next step is to translate the vision into concrete action steps. The action plan needs to include specifics. There must be an indication of exactly what actions are

needed to implement the chosen strategies, including assignment of responsibilities, a timeline and a plan for procuring necessary resources. Try to anticipate all of the issues, including exactly what will be needed, how to get commitment from those who will be affected, and the steps to be used to introduce and implement the change. Make sure that there is understanding and commitment from all of those who will be asked to implement parts of the plan. Ways to monitor and to provide feedback should be built in.

Phase four: TURNING THE VISION INTO REALITY

This phase involves action. Three key events will take place. First, the plan which was written during the previous phase is put into place, complete with monitoring for success. Second, the facilitation team will keep track of progress, providing feedback and support in the form of troubleshooting and facilitation of problem solving should any roadblocks be encountered. Finally, as with any positive change that requires time and effort, success in its various forms should be celebrated. The details on phase three follow:

o Action

Once the plan has been established, responsibilities have been assigned, and resources have been set aside, it is time for action. Those who are responsible for implementation should understand what the changes involve, should have appropriate training, and should know what their responsibilities are. Barriers to success should have been anticipated and solutions proposed.

It's time for action. The change agents should follow the plan, implementing the new practices with full awareness that there is full support for their efforts, resources to aid in the implementation, and people around to help with any problems that may arise. If difficulties are encountered, they should discuss them with others who are also implementing the strategy so that solutions can be shared.

o Ongoing monitoring and feedback

Feedback is important, and should be ongoing. Efforts are much more likely to have positive outcomes and to continue to gather support if those implementing the change openly share their successes and brainstorm on solving any problems that arise together. The facilitation team plays a key role at this stage, gathering information, debriefing with the group as needed, strategizing on any problems, and renewing commitment.

The facilitation team should also collect evaluation data which parallels that collected in the initial phase of this process. It is important for everyone to see the impact on student performance that the changes have made.

o Celebrate success

All this hard work and effort needs to be recognized. The group should celebrate milestones and successes. They should renew commitments to the process at regular intervals. They should recognize the contributions of team members, of those implementing the changes and of the students who are the recipients of the whole effort.

Once all is said and done, the process feeds back into itself. If additional changes are needed, a judgment must be made as to where in this process the group needs to go. It is unlikely that the program will have to engage in the whole process again: rather, the group may chose to explore alternatives by forming action teams or by translating other parts of the vision into reality by setting down new action plans.

Ultimately, success will be measured by the benefit to the children. For The Children is, after all, exactly that: for the children.

For The Children

Chapter 1 Program Improvement Process

Key Components:

- o Teamwork
- o Informed Decision-Making
- o Vision Setting
- o Research and Reality Based
- o Site Sensitive
- o Focused Forever On The Student

For The Children

FOUR PHASES:

- PHASE ONE:

  Gathering Information

- PHASE TWO:

  Targeting Areas For Improvement

- PHASE THREE:

  Building A Vision

- PHASE FOUR:

  Turning The Vision Into Reality

For The Children

Phase One:
GATHERING INFORMATION

(Be sure to spend enough time here)

- o Setting Up the Facilitation Team

- o Gathering the Student Performance Data

- o Gathering Information From Important Constituencies

For The Children

THE FACILITATION TEAM: MEMBERS

- Principals
- Chapter 1 Program Administrators
- Chapter 1 Teachers
- Regular Classroom Teachers

For The Children

DATA GATHERING:

STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA

- o TEST SCORES
  - Norm Referenced Tests
  - Diagnostic Tests
  - Criterion Referenced Tests
  - Statewide Achievement Tests
- o ASSESSMENTS
  - Writing
  - Student Classroom Performance
  - Time On Task
  - Others
- o OTHER MEASURES
  - Attendance
  - Grades
  - Teacher Judgment of Students
  - Retention Rates
  - Others

For The Children

DATA GATHERING:

GATHERING INFORMATION FROM IMPORTANT CONSTITUENCIES

DIALOGUE GROUPS

Teachers

Parents

Students

For The Children

DIALOGUE GROUPS: PARENTS

- o Think about their own children's needs.
  Brainstorm on relationship to program.

- o Think about sources of influence on children.
  Brainstorm on overcoming barriers to success.

DIALOGUE GROUPS: STUDENTS

- o Recommendations about what works and what would help.

For The Children

DIALOGUE GROUPS: TEACHERS

- o Groups of 3 - 5
- o Recommended Strategies:
  - Think about 2 specific students.
    Brainstorm on relationship between lack of progress and program.
  - Think about ideal program.
    Brainstorm on relationship between real and ideal.

For The Children

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACILITATION TEAM IN PHASE ONE:

- Receive training in facilitation
- Determine how information will be gathered
- Determine who is responsible for information gathering
- Set the timeline
- Arrange for the details (meeting rooms, refreshments, etc)
- Facilitate the dialogue teams
- Monitor progress of student performance data collection

For The Children

Phase Two:

TARGETING AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Focusing On The Data

- Researching Solutions

For The Children

Focusing On The Data

- Use data collected in Phase One
- Debrief with all interested parties
- Find patterns
- Build consensus
- Target areas of concern
- Set up action teams to investigate possible solutions

For The Children

Researching Solutions

- o Review the research literature on effective practices
- o Review the descriptions of exemplary programs
- o Locate programs displaying exemplary practices
- o Plan explorations
- o Visit the programs
- o Discuss relative merits of practices investigated

Consider

-Steps in implementation

-Costs/benefits

-Potential problems

-Resources needed

-Fit to local context

o Write recommendations

For The Children

FACILITATION TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES IN

PHASE TWO:

- o Facilitate focus meeting(s)
(Consensus Building)
- o Coordinate action teams
- o Set the timeline
- o Arrange the details
- o Monitor progress

For The Children

Phase Three: BUILDING A VISION

- Building a Vision

- Writing the Action Plan

For The Children

BUILDING A VISION

- o Discuss relative merits of all practices investigated
- o Compare utility/fit with local context
- o Build a vision based on review of the research, information about exemplary practices and program visitations
- o Decide on one or two strategies to pursue

For The Children

Writing the Action Plan

- o Translate directly from the vision
- o Plan should include:
  - necessary resources
  - persons responsible
  - timeline
  - steps to be taken to introduce practice
  - steps to be taken to implement practice
  - monitoring
  - troubleshooting

For The Children

FACILITATION TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES IN PHASE THREE:

- o Facilitate vision setting meeting(s)

- o Build support for outcomes

- o Facilitate writing of action plans

Phase Four:

TURNING THE VISION INTO REALITY

- ACTION
- ONGOING MONITORING AND FEEDBACK
- CELEBRATE SUCCESS

For The Children

ACTION

- Set up orientation meetings
- Provide training
- Have resources in place
- Implement the change
- Provide networking opportunities and support

For The Children

ONGOING MONITORING AND FEEDBACK

- o Gather process information
- o Debrief as needed
- o Strategize on any problems encountered
- o Renew commitment
- o Use student performance data evaluation and other sources of data for end of year impact study

For The Children

CELEBRATE SUCCESS

- o Recognize milestones completed
- o Recognize effort
- o Recognize all who had input
- o Recognize all who implement
- o Recognize the facilitation team
- o Recognize students for positive outcomes
- o Recognize any parents who helped

For The Children

FACILITATION TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES IN PHASE FOUR:

o Arrange for staff development

o Monitor Progress

o Troubleshoot

o Gather evaluation information

o Arrange for celebrations of success

FACILITATION TEAM TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Training in

- o facilitation of change and group process
- o team building
- o conflict management
- o data analysis/presentation
- o research topics
- o guiding vision setting
- o keeping staff motivated
- o monitoring
- o overcoming barriers
- o "selling" the process

For The Children

OUTCOMES:

- o Collaboration/Coordination Between Regular and Chapter 1 Teachers
- o Concrete Information for Parents
- o High Expectations for Students
- o Greater Community Involvement
- o Buy-In of Those Participating
- o Achievement Gains for Students